Promotion of Organic Farming

*72. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN:
SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the steps taken or proposed to be taken for promoting organic farming by safeguarding chemical poisoning of food and water in the country and making agricultural activity more eco-friendly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): To safeguard against ill-effects due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the Government propagates Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), which includes soil test based judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with organic manures and bio-fertilizers.The Government also promotes organic farming by advocating enhanced use of organic source nutrients like farm yard manure, compost, green manure, vermi-compost and bio-fertilizers.

The Government promotes Integrated Pest Management (IPM) which aims at controlling pests by employing all available alternate pest control methods and techniques such as cultural, mechanical and biological control with emphasis on use of bio-pesticides and pesticides of plant origin like neem formulation.

In addition, with a view to provide focussed thrust to the promotion of organic farming in the country a "National Institute of Organic Farming (NIOF)", is to be set up during Xth Plan under the proposed "National Project on Organic Farming" with an outlay of approximately Rs. 99.58 crores. The Institute would ensure promotion, production, market development and regulation of organic agriculture in the country.

Suggestions for reviewing the Dowry Prohibition Act

*73. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
DR. ABRAR AHMED :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received suggestions from various women organisations for reviewing the Dowry Prohibition Act to make its provisions more stringent and effective;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to raise the status of women?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The third meeting of Sub-Group-II of the Task Force on Women and Children chaired by Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) met on 16.7.2001 and reviewed the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) and the amendments thereto. It also considered the draft model Rules prepared by the Department of Women and Child Development for enforcement and implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act. The Department had suggested constitution of Advisory Boards and appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers by the State Governments as well as the notification of the model Rules circulated.

The National Commission for Women undertook a series of consultations on this issue with various women's organizations and activists from 2001. So far they have conducted twenty workshops in twenty states and have also heard women's groups and NGOs. Among the recommendations which emerged from these discussions, the more important suggestions are encapsulated below:

(i) The definition of Dowry should be expanded to include all possible ways of demanding it,and most States were in favour of treating the giving and taking of dowry as an offence.

(ii) Simultaneously a social movement through awareness campaigns and by educating the younger generation on the evils of dowry should be initiated.

(iii) Compulsory registration of marriages annexing a list of gifts given and taken during the wedding should be made mandatory with the certification of registration.

Appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers should be made mandatory, who should be given clear and defined powers under the Act so that they can function effectively.

(v) To bring about an awareness in this regard, a letter was addressed to the Chief Ministers of all States by the Minister of Human Resource Development in August, 2002 drawing their attention to the need to curb this social evil.

(vi) Attention was drawn to the large number of dowry deaths in the States, as against the low rate of convictions. Obviously, there was a need to strengthen investigation, prosecution and conviction. Emphasis was also given to the need to constitute Advisory Boards under Section 10 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, and to appoint Dowry Prohibition Officers with independent charge to bring about an awareness about its evils.

(vii) The Department also conducted various campaigns in the media to generate awareness about the evils of dowry, and through its various programmes and schemes, is continuously striving to improve and raise the status of women in all walks of life.

Bharat Shiksha Kosh

***74. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) the total amount collected in Bharat Shiksha Kosh since its inception;

(b) whether it is a fact that many of the donors are opposing to pass donations through BSK;

(c) if so, how Government are planning to deal with the situation; and

(d) the amount disbursed through BSK to various institutions of the country; institution-wise?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) The Government has made its one time contribution of Rs. 1.00 crore to the Kosh. No amount has so far been disbursed out of the Bharat Shiksha Kosh to any institution.

Two contributions received directly from donors, one by IIT Delhi for an amount of US $ 5,000 towards setting up of a scholarship and the other by IIT Mumbai for an amount of US $ 2,50,000 towards construction of a Lecture Hall Complex and establishing three Research Laboratories, were referred to Bharat Shiksha Kosh. These were considered and the concerned IITs were permitted to utilise the contributions for the desired purpose.